MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP COUNCIL DECEMBER 20, 2021 COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The Township Council of the Township of Bridgewater, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey, convened in a regular session on Monday, December 20, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers in the Municipal Complex, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 & via Live Online Broadcast.

Council President Pedroso read the following announcement:

Notice of Meeting

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT OF NEW JERSEY, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS PROVIDED ON JANUARY 5, 2021, BY SENDING WRITTEN NOTICE AND ELECTRONIC NOTICE TO THE COURIER NEWS AND THE STAR LEDGER; POSTING ON THE WEBSITE AND THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND FILING WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK. A SUBSEQUENT NOTICE WITH LIVESTREAM INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED ON DECEMBER 15, 2021.

On call of the roll, the following Council members were present:

Councilman Michael Kirsh Councilman Howard V. Norgalis Councilman Timothy Ring

Council Vice President Allen Kurdyla Council President Filipe Pedroso

Also Present: Matthew C. Moench, Mayor

Michael Pappas, Township Administrator

Wells Winegar, Deputy Township Administrator

Christopher Corsini, Township Attorney

Linda J. Doyle, Township Clerk

Grace Njuguna, Deputy Township Clerk

Council President Pedroso led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

DECEMBER 6, 2021 - REGULAR SESSION

These minutes will be presented to Council for approval at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

Council Reports

Councilman Kirsh

 Attended a Planning Board meeting where they completed a minor subdivision application on Foothill Road. There was opposition from a neighbor but fortunately, a collaborative solution was found and everybody walked away happy.

- Councilman Kirsh stated when he was sworn in two years ago, he made a statement about the importance of supporting our animal shelter and those animals in our community that are less fortunate. He announced that he has made his annual contribution to the Friends of Somerset Regional Animal Shelter and will be making both a financial contribution and donating supplies to the Shelter tomorrow. At a time when we are celebrating the holidays with our family pets, it is befitting to remember those animals that are not nearly as fortunate.
- Attended the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony.
- Expressed his best wishes for a happy holiday season and a happy new year.

Councilman Norgalis:

- Bridgewater and the Jewish Somerset County Community lost an icon in the passing of Shuey Horowitz. She leaves behind a legacy of civic work and social activism that is unrivaled.
- Attended the Centerbridge Senior Housing holiday party. It was wonderful to see how happy the residents of both buildings are with these townships supported senior living accommodations.
- Participated in the second annual Christmas Tree lighting at our building.
 Reverends David Hobbs and Ian Rankine also took part.
- Attended the Somerset County Business Partnership Awards Luncheon where township attorney Chris Corsini was honored as a "Top 40 under 40" award winner.
- Attended, along with Councilman Tim Ring, a coordinating meeting to discuss membership on the Bridgewater / Raritan Municipal Alliance Committee. This is a very large group of approximately 20 members from both towns representing many sectors of township life. Bridgewater membership will be confirmed by Council action sometime in late January with the first 2022 meeting to be held in February.
- Attended the Annual Meeting of the Somerset County 200 Club where Jason Dameo, a principal in Dameo Trucking located on Finderne Ave in Bridgewater, was elected President.
- Bridgewater received a "Christmas" gift from the Joint Insurance Fund that we participate in. It was a check for \$50,315 for "Return of Surplus".

- As we say goodbye to 2021 I want to thank my co council members and Michael Pappas for weathering a very tough year. A special thanks to President Pedroso for his leadership in getting us thru the year. I can't forget Township Clerk Linda Doyle, Deputy Clerk Grace Njuguna and the cheerful voice of Krista Gaffney when you call the Clerk's office. Thank you, ladies!
- In almost closing my report I want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and if you are not a Christmas follower I wish you the very best of the holiday season.
- But in finally closing please, if you or your family members are not yet COVID vaccinated get the shots as a gift to yourself and to your family. GOD willing, I will see you next year.

Councilman Ring:

- Participated in the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony held at the municipal complex on December 10th. It was an outstanding event, he thanked the Office of Constituent Relations and the recreation department for their efforts.
- He will be taking over as the Council liaison to the Planning Board.
- As Council prepares for the assignments for 2022, Councilman Ring stated he had a meeting with Councilman Norgalis, our grants coordinator and the chair of the municipal alliance concerning transition issues with regard to the municipal alliance.

Councilman Kurdyla:

- Appreciated the efforts of the Administration to work with the Council and thanked Council President Pedroso for his leadership this year.
- Attended the Christmas tree lighting and the menorah lighting events.
- Councilman Kurdyla wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season.

Council President Pedroso

- Attended the funeral service of David Stempien who was a life long resident of Bridgewater township. He was a great guy and will be missed.
- Attended the Centerbridge holiday party noting it is a joy to be part of that organization and be able to help the seniors in the community that are in need.

- Attended a youth services commission meeting last week.
- Attended a Christmas Tree event at the municipal complex and enjoyed seeing Santa Claus.
- Attended some Somerset regional animal shelter meetings in the past month and has another meeting scheduled for tomorrow with the objective to pass next year's budget.
- Wished everyone a happy and healthy Christmas and a joyful holiday season as well as a great New Year.

Mayor's Reports

Michael Pappas, Township Administrator reported for Mayor Moench:

- Council had designated a property on North Bridge Street as the Hancock preserve. Public Works created and posted a sign on the property to indicate that was the name of the property. Administrator Pappas expressed appreciation to resident Roberta Heller who helped advocate for that very worthwhile project.
- The road program has seen great success this year. Sections 1,2,3,5 and 6 are complete.
- We were able to accomplish some additional road work by creating Section 7 which was not geographically specific to one part of the community but was as a result of savings and lower costs realized through the bidding process.
- All the planned road work for 2021 is complete except for some streets on Section 4.
- Administrator Pappas thanked the Public Works department, Recreation department and Office of Constituent Relations and a number of volunteers for their efforts with the Christmas Tree Lighting and the Menorah lighting events.
- Thanked the Council for its partnership and willingness to spend a lot of time to work with and support the administration.

Presentation BRIDGEWATER PARKS

Township Administrator Pappas stated the Council had asked for a report about the condition of our parks. In August, some members of the administration visited every single municipal park in Bridgewater township and assessed conditions in an initial manner. Members of the administration provided a report of the conditions of the parks which included 18-parks in total, 2turf fields, 16 playgrounds, 9 basketball courts, 8 tennis courts, frisbee golf course, 1 cricket pitch, I sand volley ball court, 15 baseball/softball fields, 3 football fields and 9 pavilions.

Public Comment

Members of the public wishing to address the Council on any matter will be allowed two minutes to speak unless there are unusual circumstances.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.

Cathy Franco, 766 Weemac Road, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Wished everyone happy holidays. She thanked Councilman Norgalis for his public statement encouraging people to get their COVID-19 shots.

What is the cost for the change from Blue Cross Blue Shield to the State health Benefit plan? Will this be a cost savings considering most health insurances have increased approximately 15%? What is the average number of hours required to be considered eligible for benefits and how does this affect employees' verses elected official's eligibility? What is the contribution for spouse/family etc. and is it in line with what the general public contributes for this type of coverage for their families? What are the anticipated overall savings in switching and is the new plan considered a self-funded health insurance plan?

With regard to the park's presentation, Ms. Franco appreciated the information provided tonight and agreed with Councilman Pedroso and other members of the Council who supported soliciting the public at large for their opinion on how to move forward and reaching out to them to participate whether through contributions of time or money.

Jennifer Loughran, 716 Falcon Court, Bridgewater, NJ 08807

With regard to the discussion on the parks, she encouraged the town to also consider having a day where the township community/families can participate in cleaning the parks, maintaining the parks perhaps on Earth Day. She offered it is good to encourage a sense of ownership in the community especially with children.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the public comment portion was closed.

Public Hearing & Final Action Ordinances AN ORDINANCE TO SET THE COMPENSATION OF THE MAYOR, TOWNSHIP COUNCIL MEMBERS, DEPARTMENT HEADS AND CERTAIN OTHER MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 374 OF THE PUBLIC LAWS OF 1985; N.J.S.A. 2A:809; N.J.S.A. 2A:8-13; N.J.S.A. 40A:9-165; N.J.S.A.40A:9-135; N.J.S.A. 40A:9-146, AND CHAPTER 95 OF THE PUBLIC LAWS OF 1996

Township Administrator Pappas explained it has been the practice to provide additional compensation to department heads by ordinance commensurate with what the other employees have received which is 2%. This is reflected in the numbers with the only difference being that one listed individual's salary is higher as they will assume additional responsibilities.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting was opened to the public.

No one wished to be heard.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the public comment portion was closed.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the foregoing Ordinance was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh Aye
Councilman Kurdyla Aye
Councilman Norgalis Aye
Councilman Ring Aye
Council President Pedroso Aye

ORDINANCE #21-22 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-288 is appended to the official minutes

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING THE DONATION OF REAL PROPERTY VALUED AT ITS CURRENT TAX ASSESSMENT OF ONE THOUSAND AND THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,300.00) LOCATED ON BROAD STREET AT BLOCK 572, LOT 12 ON THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER TAX MAP

Township Administrator Pappas explained this donated lot is surrounded by township owned property. It was noted this is a Paper street in the area of the senior center.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the meeting was opened to the public.

No one wished to be heard.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the public comment portion was closed.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the foregoing Ordinance was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh Aye
Councilman Kurdyla Aye
Councilman Norgalis Aye
Councilman Ring Aye
Council President Pedroso Aye

ORDINANCE #21-23 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-289 is appended to the official minutes

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$400,000, FOR MIDDLE BROOK TRUNK SEWER RENOVATIONS AND OTHER SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP DUE TO FLOODING RESULTING FROM HURRICANE IDA IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$400,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION.

Township Administrator Pappas explained this is primarily for the repair of the significant damage from Hurricane Ida. FEMA will be providing reimbursement for most of the expenses.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting was opened to the public.

No one wished to be heard.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the public comment portion was closed.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the foregoing Ordinance was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh Aye
Councilman Kurdyla Aye
Councilman Norgalis Aye
Councilman Ring Aye

ORDINANCE #21-24 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-290 is appended to the official minutes

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$2,000,000 FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO VARIOUS STREETS, ROADWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSHIP AND RENOVATION OF VOSSELLER AVENUE RETAINING WALL AND OTHER DITCH EXCAVATION IMPROVEMENTS DUE TO FLOODING RESULTING FROM HURRICANE IDA IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER, IN THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET, NEW JERSEY AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$1,900,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP FOR FINANCING PART OF THE APPROPRIATION.

These are bonds to pay for the emergency appropriation as part of Ida recovery. In order to have no impact on taxes, we have to fund this by bond & then pay immediately after FEMA reimbursement.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the meeting was opened to the public.

No one wished to be heard.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Ring, the public comment portion was closed.

On motion of Councilman Kirsh, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the foregoing Ordinance was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh Aye
Councilman Kurdyla Aye
Councilman Norgalis Aye
Councilman Ring Aye
Council President Pedroso Aye

ORDINANCE #21-25 WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-291 is appended to the official minutes

Resolutions

AUTHORIZING BUDGET TRANSFERS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021 APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$423,462.00 IN THE CURRENT FUND AND \$150,000.00 IN THE SEWER OPERATING FUND

Township Administrator Pappas explained that each year, municipalities present adjustments to line items in the budget. This resolution does not constitute any additional expenses on the budget.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh Aye
Councilman Kurdyla Aye
Councilman Norgalis Aye
Councilman Ring Aye
Council President Pedroso Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-292 is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE RENEWAL OF HEALTHCARE COVERAGE FROM HORIZON BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF NEW JERSEY TO PROVIDE MEDICAL, PRESCRIPTION AND VISION INSURANCE TO THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF CALENDAR YEAR 2022 IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$2,409,000.00 (JANUARY 1, 2022 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2022)

Township Administrator Pappas explained we are seeing a very significant increase in our health premiums which is approximately a 29% increase/ \$2M to our budget for the year. We are interested in pursuing the State health benefit plan which will be less costly although we do not have a definitive number yet. We are also attempting, with our risk manager, to make some modifications that would lessen that 29%. This resolution will allow us to continue our current insurance through 3/31/2022.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh Aye
Councilman Kurdyla Aye
Councilman Norgalis Aye
Councilman Ring Aye
Council President Pedroso Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-293 is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION UNDER THE STATE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM WITH THE NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF PENSIONS AND BENEFITS TO PROVIDE

MEDICAL INSURANCE TO THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2022

AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 48 (N.J.S.A. 52:14.17.38) UNDER WHICH A PUBLIC EMPLOYER MAY AGREE TO PAY FOR THE STATE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM WITH THE NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF PENSIONS AND BENEFITS COVERAGE OF CERTAIN RETIREES EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2022.

Township Administrator Pappas explained we believe the State health plan will be less costly and Administration will come back to the Council and compare definitively when we have the numbers. Council was in consensus to table above resolutions until we have more information.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the foregoing resolution was tabled. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Pedroso	Aye

CHANGE ORDER AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$6,000 TO THE TOWNSHIP PLANNER, SCARLETT DOYLE, CONTRACT FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2021

Township Administrator Pappas stated we had an employee who had to leave for medical reasons for an extended period of time and Ms. Doyle assisted in the Zoning Department.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Pedroso	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-294 is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AN ADDITIONAL \$20,000.00 FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2021 FOR ROBERT HALF INTERNATIONAL INC FOR TEMPORARY LABOR IN THE TAX AND FINANCE OFFICE

Township Administrator Pappas explained we have had numerous changes and individuals leave our Finance department and have had to rely on temporary employees to continue to function.

On motion of Councilman Kurdyla, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Pedroso	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-295 is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT TO RAPID PUMP & METER SERVICE CO., INC. OF PO BOX AY, 285 STRAIGHT STREET, PATERSON, NJ 07059 FOR THE CONTRACT TO FURNISH, INSTALL, AND OPERATE A SANITARY SEWER BYPASS SYSTEM AT THE GILBRIDE SANITARY SEWER PUMP STATION, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$281,290.00 FUNDED THROUGH THE 21-13 SEWER BOND ORDINANCE

Thomas Genova, Director of Municipal Services explained this is the final phase of the Gilbride pump station rehabilitation. The work entails a total bypass so that we can continue replacing the valves that will in turn get us towards new pumps. This contractor will not only do a total bypass but they are also going to clean out the wet well.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Pedroso	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-296 is appended to the official minutes

AWARD OF CONTRACT IN THE SUM OF \$18,251.20 TO GALLS, 1340 RUSSELL CAVE ROAD, LEXINGTON, KY FOR 16 BALLISTIC VESTS AND VEST CARRIERS FROM POINT BLANK VISION IIIA

Councilman Norgalis suggested the following word change to paragraph #3:

WHEREAS, Point Blank Vision IIIA vests are currently used by the Police department and it would be fiscally irresponsible and a liability to switch brands when the which expire every five years are currently used by the Police Department; and

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the foregoing resolution was proposed as amended. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Pedroso	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-297 is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT TO CHRIS BATTAGLIA OF BATTAGLIA ASSOCIATES LLC, 490 RIDGEFIELD TERRACE, FAIRVIEW, NEW JERSEY 07022 FOR PAYROLL PROCESSING SERVICES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$15,600 FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2022 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2022.

Township Administrator Pappas explained we engaged this service on July 1st after our payroll manager left. We had less than 2-weeks notice to continue the payroll function. Since then, we have a new employee who will take over this function but, in the meantime, this firm will continue providing services as we make the transition.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Pedroso	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-298 is appended to the official minutes

RESOLUTION TO EXTEND THE SHARED MUNICIPAL COURT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER AND THE BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE FOR SIX MONTHS THROUGH JUNE 30, 2022, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$129,504.77

Following an extensive discussion regarding shared court services between Bridgewater Township and the Borough of Somerville, Council agreed to support a six-month extension of a joint municipal court utilizing the existing courtroom, judge's chambers, and necessary equipment in our Municipal Complex. In that time, the cost to run the Court between the two municipalities will be quantified to ensure the financials make sense for Bridgewater. If the findings are that shared agreement should be terminated, that will be done in a timely manner that allows for a 90-day notice to Somerville.

On motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Norgalis, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Pedroso	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-299 is appended to the official minutes

AUTHORIZING THE DENTAL COVERAGE FROM DELTA DENTAL OF NEW JERSEY, INC. TO PROVIDE DENTAL INSURANCE TO THE TOWNSHIP OF BRIDGEWATER FOR A TOTAL ANNUAL PREMIUM OF \$246,922.00 FOR THE YEAR 2022

Township Administrator Pappas explained this resolution will allow for dental coverage with Delta Dental for the year 2022.

On motion of Councilman Norgalis, seconded by Councilman Ring, the foregoing resolution was proposed. The vote was as follows:

Councilman Kirsh	Aye
Councilman Kurdyla	Aye
Councilman Norgalis	Aye
Councilman Ring	Aye
Council President Pedroso	Aye

THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-300 is appended to the official minutes

Closed Session

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Bridgewater Township Council that this body will now hold a closed meeting to discuss:

- 1. Contract Negotiations Warren Township Sewer Agreement
- 2. Settlement Agreement National Opioid Settlement
- 3. Litigation Rise Against Hate v. Township of Bridgewater

When and if the matters discussed become public record, this will be made known to the public at that time.

The public is excluded from said meeting and further notice thereof is dispensed with all in accordance with Sections 8 and 4a of the Open Public Meetings Act.

On the motion of Councilman Kirsh seconded by Councilman Kurdyla, Council convened in closed session at approximately 9:35 p.m.

A copy of resolution #21-12-20-301 is appended to the official minutes.

On the motion of Councilman Ring, seconded by Councilman Kirsh, the meeting reconvened to open session at approximately 10:46 p.m. and adjourned immediately thereafter.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda J. Doyle, RMC Municipal Clerk

Filipe Pedroso Council President